

let's give a hand to the band over here. [Applause]

You know, one reason we wanted to come here is that the house in the United States where the President lives is called *Casa Blanca*. And so when I came here today, the mayor said to me, "Here you're in my Casa Blanca and I am the boss, but when I come to visit you, you can be the boss in your Casa Blanca."

Let me say to all of you, you should be very proud of your country and your President, for beginning tomorrow Chile will host and President Frei will preside over the Summit of the Americas, a gathering of the 34 freely elected leaders of our hemisphere. And the real reason we are here is because we want you to know that we will do our best to discuss things and work together on things that will make your lives better.

We believe that the people of Chile, the people of the United States, the people of all the Americas will share a common future. And we want it to be a future with better education for all of our children, better health care for all of our people, a cleaner environment in every nation in the Americas, and a stronger, better, freer future in which we are all working together.

The United States is proud to be a partner and a friend of Chile, and I have enjoyed very much coming here today and seeing all of you. In the faces of the children, I see the future of the Americas, and I like what I see very much.

Thank you very much. *Muchas gracias*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:22 p.m. in the town square. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Manuel Vera of Casablanca. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at the Opening Session of the Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile *April 18, 1998*

President Frei, distinguished heads of state, leaders of the Chilean Congress, Supreme Court, members of the diplomatic corps, President Wolfensohn, President Iglesias, Secretary General Gaviria, Secretary

General Ruggiero, Director General Alleyne. Four years ago in Miami, we, the democratic nations of this hemisphere, met in the historic Summit of the Americas and pledged ourselves to a common future rooted in shared values, shared burdens, shared progress, and embodied in our call for a free trade area of the Americas by 2005.

I thank all my fellow leaders and their governments for their faithfulness to the summit process. I thank especially those who helped us to begin the Summit of the Americas in 1994.

Now we come together in Santiago. What shall we do? First, we should celebrate a new reality in the Americas, the march of freedom, prosperity, peace, and partnership among our nations. Second, we should recognize that in all our nations too many people have not felt this new reality, and we should resolve to continue to work together until they do.

As we look back on the 3½ years since the Miami summit, there is much to be proud of, as our report, "From Words to Deeds" documents. The economy of the region has grown 15 percent. Last year average growth was 5 percent, and inflation was the lowest in 50 years. Chile and Uruguay have set the standard for poverty reduction and fiscal responsibility. Brazil and Argentina have slowed inflation to a crawl. Mexico has overcome adversity, transformed its economy, broadened its democracy. Bolivia has attracted new foreign investments and given its citizens a greater stake in their future. Venezuela's Apertura program is drawing investment to develop its energy resources. Peru and Ecuador, with a little help from their friends, are working towards a peaceful end to their decades-long border dispute. Central America, after years of strife, is well on the way to achieving its long-held vision of democracy and integration and growth. Caribbean nations are joining forces to expand their economies and to defend their shores against drugs and crime.

Together we have begun to create the free trade area of the Americas, a thriving market of 800 million people invested in each other's future, enriching each other's lives, weaving

a tapestry of interdependence that strengthens every nation. The Americas have set a new standard for the world in the defense of liberty and justice through our collective commitment to defend democracy wherever it is at risk in our hemisphere. Concerted action by neighbors and friends already has helped to restore or preserve democracy and human rights in Haiti, Guatemala, and Paraguay.

Our cooperation in the fight against drugs has intensified, based on an understanding that drugs are a problem for all of us and all of us must work together to attack both demand and supply. We've adopted tough new measures against money laundering, forged the first multilateral treaty in the world to fight corruption, so that our societies will be governed by the rule of law. We have signed an historic convention to stop the illegal trade in guns in our hemisphere. We're working to advance the environment and public health.

Our people are healthier, our water safer, our air cleaner than 4 years ago. We are wiping measles off our hemisphere's map, dropping from more than 23,000 cases in 1994 to less than 500 so far this year. We're phasing out lead from gasoline. In 1996, 12 nations achieved this goal; by 2001, there will be 20. We're working together to promote a clean energy future and to meet the challenge of climate change.

I thank the efforts of many people in this regard, the Vice President and our Government, and many in other governments throughout this hemisphere.

The Miami summit was a watershed in the history of our hemisphere, as the leaders of free people embraced a common vision of the future and a common strategy for achieving it. The journey from Miami to Santiago has been filled with progress toward our goals. Now, here, and on the road forward from here, we must do more to ensure that the path of reform and democracy and integration actually lifts the lives of ordinary people in all our nations.

Poverty throughout the hemisphere is still too high; income disparity is too great; civil society too fragile; justice systems too weak; too many people still lack the education and skills necessary to succeed in the new econ-

omy. In short, too few feel change working for them. Therefore, with democracy and free markets now in place, we must vigorously launch a second generation of reforms for the next generation of Americans. No priority is more important than giving our children an excellent education.

The fate of nations in the 21st century turns on what all citizens know and whether all citizens can quickly learn. Too often, resources are spent primarily on higher education for the few. We must all redirect our focus toward higher quality education for all. I especially thank Presidents Frei, Cardoso, Menem, and Zedillo for their leadership to give all our children a good education, with well-equipped classrooms, well-trained teachers, high standards, and accountability. This is a goal we must vigorously embrace and work hard to realize.

We will also work here to deepen democracy and respect for human rights. We know free elections are democracy's first step, not the last. We'll support the Organization of American States special rapporteur for freedom of expression; launch a regional justice center to train judges and prosecutors; strengthen local government institutions to bring power closer to people; and in its 50th year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we will redouble our efforts to protect the human rights of all people.

We will also do more to defend democracy against its enemies, corruption, terrorism, and drugs. The new hemispheric alliance against drugs we will launch here will encourage, support, and improve all our national efforts to fight this common threat as partners. We'll continue to promote our common prosperity by launching negotiations for a free trade area of the Americas.

I want to underscore the importance we attach to a special civil society committee that will allow a broad array of stakeholders within all our societies the opportunity to make their voices heard. If economic integration in a global economy is to work for all people, we must demonstrate that we can have economic growth and lift labor standards for all our workers. We must demonstrate that we can grow the economy and preserve, indeed, even improve the environment. This civil society committee will give the peoples of our

nations the chance to make that argument, and we must prove that we can make the argument work.

Let me reaffirm to all my colleagues, the United States may not yet have fast-track legislation, but we will. And I assure you that our commitment to the free trade area of the Americas will be in the fast lane of our concerns.

We must do that. After all, more than one-third of the United States growth in the last few years has come from expanded trade. More than 40 percent of our exports go to our neighbors seated on this platform. We can only continue to grow and create jobs in the United States if we continue to reach out to our neighbors for more open markets and freer trade. That is the fundamental observation that all of us share. Your prosperity lifts ours; our prosperity lifts yours. As more good jobs are created in any nation, as economies grow and people thrive, they become better partners for each other and for others around the world. Finally, we must take further steps to lift people from poverty and spread the benefit of progress to every member of society, from supporting women's full participation in the lives of our countries, to providing loans to microentrepreneurs, to broadening property ownership.

Now, this Santiago agenda is ambitious, but it is imperative. Again, let me applaud President Frei for his leadership, for bringing us all here together, and for supporting such a broad and deep agenda. If we are to seize the opportunities and meet the challenges of our time, we must pursue this agenda, and we must do it together.

The first broad meeting of representatives from our hemisphere took place in 1889 in Washington, DC. Times were different and slower then. The delegates met for more than 6 months and toured around our Nation by train. The only bad thing was they had to listen to even more speeches. But in that meeting our predecessors, drawing on Bolivar's vision of hemispheric unity, set a precedent for cooperation that grew over 50 years later from that seed into the OAS.

Four years ago at Miami, we planted the seed of a new partnership for a new century. Now we can and must do what is necessary for that seed to grow—to grow in freedom

and opportunity and cooperation. The Americas can be a model for all the world in the 21st century. That is, after all, the spirit of the Summit of the Americas and the promise of Santiago.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. in the San Cristobol Room at the Sheraton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to James D. Wolfensohn, president, World Bank; Enrique Iglesias, president, Inter-American Development Bank; Cesar Gaviria, Secretary General, Organization of American States; Renato Ruggiero, Secretary General, World Trade Organization; Sir George A.O. Alleyne, Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau; President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil; President Carlos Saul Menem of Argentina; and President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico.

The President's Radio Address

April 18, 1998

Good morning. Although Hillary and I are in Chile, far from home today, our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Arkansas, who have suffered the latest in a series of tornadoes that swept through the South with ferocious force.

Yesterday I spoke with the Vice President, who was in his home State of Tennessee to see the damage, comfort the victims, and reassure the people of Tennessee that we're standing ready to help them in this time of crisis.

It's often been said that when disaster strikes, the things that divide us fall away, as neighbor helps neighbor and stranger reaches out to stranger. We saw this just a year ago tomorrow in Grand Forks, North Dakota, when flood and fire nearly destroyed the entire city but could not destroy the spirit of its residents or stop its newspaper, the Grand Forks Herald, which just this week was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for public service. We saw it again this winter in New England, when ice storms isolated entire communities but couldn't keep people apart. And we saw it in Florida and Georgia, Alabama and Arkansas, as tornadoes have torn towns to pieces but have not taken away people's hope.